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Reaction to "Salvation" by Langston Hughes

After reading "Salvation" by Langston Hughes, I have a mixed feeling of confusion and agreement. Right at the beginning of this writing, Langston already confuses me by saying "I was saved from sin when I was going on thirteen. But not really saved". Why was he "saved but not really saved"? It has made me think a lot but I still couldn't give an answer to this question.

Then Langston begins to talk about his first time joining the revival at his aunt's church. She told Langston that he will be "saved" when he sees a light and Jesus comes into his life. As a thirteen-year old boy, he is so excited to see Jesus and earn salvation. He keeps sitting in a crowded church, waiting for Jesus while the other children step up and are saved. The church's minister asks him: "Why don't you come? Why don't you come and be saved?". I wonder whether his aunt and many old people lied to him. He hasn't seen either a light or Jesus yet so how he could be saved. I guess since I am brought up in a Buddhist family, I barely know about God, Jesus and salvation. That's why I'm getting confused. In my opinion, this young little boy wanted to literally see Jesus and a light. It would be a magical thing for a child. Langston simply wants to show us how the way of thinking of a concept of things of a child is different from an adult. His aunt should have fully explained things to him.

In the next paragraph, there is boy who is left behind with Langston when the others step up and are saved. Later, he loses his patience and gets up even though he doesn't believe. In the sentence " God had not struck Westley dead for taking his name in vain or for lying in the temple", I think Langston was quite upset about it. He was also pressured by the crowd. Langston uses a lot of sounds like "mourning, shouting, crying, praying" which make me put myself into Langston's position and feel the same pressure. Then he thought he'd better lie because his aunt was crying and he really wanted to go home. He could no longer wait for Jesus. If I were him, I would do that too.

In the last paragraph, he talks about how he felt after the revival at the church. He couldn't sleep and kept crying. His aunt thought he was crying because he had seen Jesus. But in fact, he cried because he had sinned. He had deceived everyone. This results in his belief that Jesus does not exist because Jesus did not help him.

As a little boy, Langston couldn't fully get what his aunt said before the revival. Neither do I since I have a different religion. If I were in his position, I would do the same thing. And I still have no idea when he said "saved but not really saved". It is quite confusing for me.